1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

Lowie emphasizes the play aspect of this phase of warfare. "Obviously," he writes of the Crow, "the idea was not primarily to reduce a hostile force but to execute a 'stunt'; to play a game according to whimsical rules."[1] 727 555

In addition to the standardized honors any audacious deed performed against the enemy could be claimed as a coup by a Shoshone or Comanche.

WAR INITIATIVE

The prosecution of warfare was very much a matter of individual discretion. Any Comanche was theoretically eligible to lead a war party. There was no chief or power which could say him nay. Were the individual not, however, a man of proved reputation or the possessor of potent medicine, his raid would remain strictly personal and private. He would simply be unable to muster a following. Nevertheless, no one would object to his going out alone. It was quite a different matter, on the other hand, if a man whose qualities had been attested in combat let his intention to take the war path be known. All fighters who wished to do so came to signify their desire to join his party. Dreams about a successful raid were not deemed necessary as a sanction for starting a war party, but in most cases such dreams were the effective stimulus. 721 [787]

There were two primary motivations for organizing a war party. The first was an entirely personal matter, depending simply upon desire for action, honors, or horses. Merely to feel the urge was to be at liberty to muster such men as would volunteer to go. On the other hand, a war party instigator might bind himself to avenge the death of a fellow tribesman by enemy hands. A slain man's father carried a heavy weight upon his heart while his dead son remained unavenged. "His conscience is not clear." There was but one thing for him to do. He must seek out the lodge of a brave warrior who had compassion for his suffering and whom people would trust and follow. Carrying his sacred pipe, the father or relative of the dead man offered smoke. The warrior knew what was wanted. If he accepted the pipe, smoking with the emissary, he bound himself in contract to take out a party which would not return until it had taken an enemy scalp. (We were unable to discover a single instance in which the pledge was unfulfilled.)

The warrior made known to the camp that he was going forth. He was to avenge the death of "their" slain friend. He exhorted. He said the young men would join him; he told the people that braves did not care, though it meant death. The Vengeance Dance was held before departure. The dancers were those who were going to join the war party. This sort of war party

[1] R. H. Lowie, *The Crow Indians* (New York, 1937), p. 228.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

To combat sorcery counter-medicine was first available. This was a socially acceptable action which in content was precisely the same as was the illegal grievance against which it moved.[8] Counter-medicine was used when a power surpassing that which lay in the curse was available. An alternative was to cause the sorcerer to break his tabus. On the purely physical plane, when neither of these two methods was successful or available, coercive threats were hurled, with the result that the accused took the conditional curse, or in rare instances either out-faced the "prosecutors" or was violently attacked by them.

But first there was the problem of evidence. Here the situation was different from that we have observed in the marital situation. The act of aggression was secret and the aggressor a dangerous person. The problem, therefore was one not only of evidence—it was also one of detection.

With a number of medicine owners in the tribe, and every shaman a potential sorcerer, the finding of the guilty one was not a simple matter. The recourse was to divination.

When a tribesman had fallen under the curse of a sorcerer, only a powerful shaman could discover the nature and source of the magic. For this each medicine man had his own special technique. In all cases, however, its essence lay in divination. The general pattern was to divine by waving an eagle feather medicine-fan over the patient while singing medicine songs. When the power was strong enough, the image of the guilty sorcerer appeared beneath the fan. So certain was the technique in the more common cases that our informants explained, "When a feather is shot into a person, a medicine man can see just like reading a newspaper who put it there." The words of a diviner were accepted truth for those associated with the sick man. They stood as such unless the accused sorcerer was firm in denial.

Other divinational techniques were found in the peyote and beaver ceremonies. The former is a relatively modern, and the latter an ancient religious rite. The beaver ceremony was a notable curing service; it was one of the few Comanche religious forms in which there was group participation.

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[8] There is nothing incongruous in magic as an instrument of law. When used as a recognized sanction, it serves a justifiable end, and is therefore "good." It must not be forgotten that all sanctions, whatever their nature, work a harm to the wrong-doer. It is this that gives sanctions their power of restraint. So Malinowski sees sorcery as a means of maintaining social order in Melanesia, *Crime and Custom*, pp. 85–94. Hogbin goes with him in interpreting the data from Ontong Java, *Law and Order in Polynesia* (New York, 1936), pp. 216–223. Evans-Pritchard sounds the same note for the Zande of Africa, *Sorcery and Native Opinion* (Africa, vol. 4, 1931), pp. 22–55.

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The ceremony, which lasted several nights, was rich in ritual detail and symbolism. As a by-product of the ceremony, detection of sorcery could occur. At a stage of the ceremony the officiating beaver medicine-man went into a trance. It was then that he "saw" the sorcerer.

The peyote ceremony was drawn upon in much the same way. In using the peyote ceremony to cure a sick person, the ritual leader—who does the curing—received a vision of the sorcerer.[6]

The diviner, when he was powerful enough as a doctor, undertook the cure as the next step. Divination revealed the sorcerer and also the nature of the curse. Usually the doctor knew well enough the relative strength of his medicine when matched with that of the sorcerer. When he thought his best would equal or surpass the power of the curse, he threw his medicine against it. When he was doubtful, he took a chance on doctoring, or he recommended another specialist, or he took to the ruse of advising how the sorcerer could be brought to grief by causing him to break his tabus. When this succeeded, it automatically killed the powers of the sorcerer's medicine, thereby nullifying the curse.

Curing and throwing back the curse were in Comanche society essentially one and the same. It was defense and revenge in one. The theory was that a curse let loose must find a goal. Under the direction of the curing doctor a counter-medicine—an anti-body—was induced into the body of the patient and the curse was driven out. This was most commonly demonstrated to the relatives of the sick one by pulling the foreign substance—the feather or whatnot—from the patient's body. It was good showmanship. The doctor breathed on it, rubbed it four times, and blew it from his palm away into the air. The patient got well; the sorcerer got sick. For the sorcerer there seems to have been no further cure. The only escape from this was for the sorcerer to recall his medicine before the cure began. Otherwise, either he or his intended victim died.

Post Oak Jim was once the mark of a rival medicine man in a case which illustrates this.

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[6] A good many Comanches are peyote devotees today. Meetings are held regularly throughout the year. Peyote is used for worship and curing, but the sorcery aspect has, so far as we know, dropped out of Comanche medical theory. This is in sharp contrast to Mescalero Apache practice, whereby peyoteism has become a vehicle for sorcery rivalry as described by M. E. Opler, *The Influence of Aboriginal Pattern and White Contact on a Recently Introduced Ceremony, the Mescalero Peyote Rite* (Journal of American Folklore, vol. 49, 1937), pp. 143–166. For definitive treatment of peyoteism see W. LaBarre, *The Peyote Cult* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 19, 1938).

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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chunk being made up into one roll of meat. Now the butcher cut up through the ventral to remove the entrails, separating the ribs from the sternum. Slicing between the middle ribs, he next took their free ends in both hands and pulled up and outward to break the rib steaks off from the spine. At last, the bare spine with rump and head was all that remained; the tail had been skinned out with the hide. The meat was bagged in the hides, loaded on the pack horses, and all was ready to be toted back to the main camp for further processing.

Comanche hunters who were out butchering alone had their buffalo horses trained to stand by as sentinels. Butchering in a hurry is an intense business and a man cannot very well keep a close lookout for danger. But he could give a quick glance to his horse's ears. His horse had learned to "wave" his ears alternately if another buffalo or coyote was close. If it was a man, he pitched both ears forward. "Thus many lives were saved," says White Wolf.

Back in the camp, the men's work was done for the time being. While the women turned to, the bucks relaxed in feasting and recounting their exploits. The women were slicing the meat into very thin filets which were hung over the racks for a quick sun-drying. Hides were pegged out on the ground, flesh side up, so that they could be fleshed and scraped for later tanning.

As soon as the women caught up with their work, another kill was made. This procedure continued until enough meat and skins were obtained and cold weather drove the Indians to their winter camp, or until there were no more buffalo.

Buffalo were so plentiful in the Southern Plains that the Comanches rarely bothered to fortify themselves for the communal hunt by making medicine. There were times, nevertheless, when the wandering herds could not be found. Then the "chief," or hunt leader, went with his pipe to a medicine man who had power. Offering his smoke, he asked that the hunt ritual be performed. His wish would be granted, but unfortunately we do not have the details of the kind of medicine that was made. Presumably it was similar to the magic antelope surround described in the next chapter.

The horned toad was also believed to be a help in locating the buffalo, for when asked the question, "he will always run in the

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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direction of buffalo." That is why he is called *kusɛtɛmini*, "asking about the buffalo." Ravens also were buffalo pointers in Comanche belief. They like to eat carrion and were always following the herds to eat the bugs on their hides. When a raven circled over the camp four times, dipping his head and cawing, "he was telling The People where the herd is; he will fly off and show the way."[42]

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Toward the end of or soon after the hunt, a man and wife of respectable family who were noted for their goodness and purity were likely to give a Buffalo Tongue Dance or feast. Men, women, and the older unmarried adolescents who had participated in the hunt were encouraged to attend. The ceremony began early in the morning and ended with the meal at midday. A fire was built outside the tipi and the buffalo tongues were roasted over the coals. When the meat was done, the men were asked to seat themselves in a semicircle about the fire. The women took a position about twenty steps from the opening of the circle. The host or a leading medicine man lighted the pipe. He blew the first puff of smoke toward the sun, the second toward the earth, and one in each of the four directions. The pipe was then passed to the other men who smoked likewise. This was an oath by which the smoker bound himself to speak truthfully.

After all had smoked, a woman was called upon to come forward and serve the tongue. Any man who had had illicit sexual relations with her called out, "no, no," and she returned to her place. If everyone remained quiet, she came forward and served the tongue to the assembled group amid much applause and shrill cries of "li-li-li-li" from all the women present. No dancing or singing accompanied the ceremony.[43]

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This little act was lifted bodily from the Sun Dance complex of other Plains Indians. A Cheyenne Sun Dance giver must collect hundreds of buffalo tongues to distribute to the Sun Dance officers and participants. The Crow ritual called for an "absolutely virtuous woman to serve as Tree-notcher, one who had been purchased in marriage and had been scrupulously chaste."[44] Virtue was tested in a manner similar to that just described. Among Indians like the Crows

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[42] Informant: Post Oak Jim.

[43] Informants: Kills Something; Face Wrinkling Like Getting Old. Other informants were aware of this ceremony.

[44] R. H. Lowie. *The Crow Indians*, 312.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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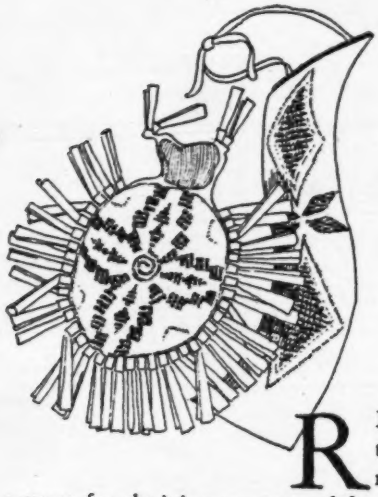

VII

The Search for Power

RELIGIOUS practice among the Comanches consisted primarily of socially recognized patterns for obtaining supernatural favor. There were patterns for both individual and community ceremonials, but unlike religious practices in our own society, group participation was extremely limited in extent and importance. In almost every instance, it must be emphasized, the observance was a matter of individual concern. There was no religious organization, no theocracy, no priestly class, no dogma. Every man could be his own priest and his own prophet—the individual interpreter of the wills and ways of the spirits. A direct revelation without priestly go-between was the panacea for human ills and aspirations, the one secure basis of earthly goods.

Every Comanche consumed with ambition set forth in quest of a vision from which power (*puha*) was to be derived. His power, or medicine as it is generally called, came in a mystic visitation, a dream phenomenon or hallucinatory experience; the Comanches did not confuse an ordinary dream with a revelation. Visions came only when sought and under certain stringent conditions. Dreams were interesting experiences, and hardly more. Bad dreams did not portend bad luck unless the dreamer revealed them within four days.

The vision was fundamental in the guardian spirit complex. Certainly it was to the Indian an unquestionable means of obtaining power. Its authority was absolute. Psychic experiences were socially recognized and regarded as the very cornerstone of cultural life. The

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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787 experience gave an individual a feeling of significance, a "thrill" of greater or less intensity. Among the tribes east of the Rockies, the emphasis was upon the vision induced by hunger, thirst, purgatives, or self-laceration; while west of the mountains a widespread attitude regarded the vision as unsought, involuntary, a thing of predisposition.[1] The Comanches recognized both forms. They retained a Shoshonean residue (the unsought dream) and had acquired the Plains method of reaching out for power. Power might come as an unsought blessing, but that was not sufficient; hence a Comanche strived for it by courting the aid of the supernaturals in the traditional way but without self-torture.

The vision was sought on continually recurring occasions: for mourning, for warpaths, for revenge, for curing disease, for success in hunting and raiding. Men who became especially noteworthy for their success in healing, procuring desired weather conditions, or ensuring a successful chase or war party, came to be singled out as medicine men, *puhakat*. The supreme test of power was whether a revelation worked. The Indian was a pragmatist. Not everyone who claimed supernatural gifts was signally successful. Either the medicine was not strong enough, or the protégé did not carry out commands accurately, or the vision-seeker had been maliciously deceived.

The selection of a man's medicine was the most important and sacred event in his life. Growing up with a firm belief in the all-sufficiency of personal visions, young men sought them without any prompting from their elders. From the stories of renowned contemporaries o. mythical heroes they had learned that this was the way to make their mark. In later life there was usually some special reason, such as the desire for vengeance or worry over a sick child, that drove a man to seek supernatural aid. In any case the Comanche followed a well-established pattern.

The initial vision quest was made about the time of puberty, before the youth had gone on the warpath for the first time. The vision-seeker was usually prepared by a local medicine man for the desired experience. As a form or symbol of purification, the candidate was required to bathe, in a preliminary step to seeking relations with the supernatural.[2] It was necessary for the candidate to possess four things:

[1] Ruth Benedict. *The Concept of the Guardian Spirit in North America*, 23–26.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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a buffalo robe, a bone pipe, tobacco, and the material for producing a light. Clad only in breechclout and moccasins, he set out to find a place far enough removed that people would not disturb him, and still near enough to camp that it would not be too difficult to return when weak from hunger. He stopped four times on the way, each time smoking and praying. The spot selected was a solitary place at the top of a hill, or perhaps the site of a grave of a famous warrior or, more especially, of a medicine man who had had the kind of power the candidate desired. Medicine Bluff in the Wichita Mountains was one of the favorite locations.

The candidate preferred a position on the south slope where he could see both east and west. As darkness approached, he smoked and prayed for power, for good power, and that he might use it for good. He covered himself with the buffalo robe at night as he lay facing the east, and he had to keep his head covered the whole night through. Rising at daybreak, he faced the east to receive the benefit of the power radiating from the sun. He was required to fast during the vigil, but unlike some Plains people, inflicted no self-torture. The Comanche was confident of himself as a man: he was reverent toward the power-giving spirits, but he felt no need to debase himself before them, to lacerate and mutilate himself in sacrificial appeasement. He was quietly humble before the sources of spiritual power, but he saw no call to demean himself in lamentation and self-pity. He called not for mercy; for him there was no Siouxan self-objection as in the opening plaint of a Winnebago on the vision quest: "O, spirits, here humble in heart I stand beseeching you." For him, no Arapaho wails:

Father have pity on me,
Father have pity on me,
I am crying for thirst,
I am crying for thirst,
All is gone—I have nothing to eat,
All is gone—I have nothing to eat.

The Comanche on the vision quest might suffer the inner turmoil of anxiety and apprehension; yet he lay quietly waiting for

[2] Informants: Kills Something; Yellowfish; also, Ralph Linton, "The Comanche Sun Dance," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVII (1935), 424; Marcy, *Adventure on Red River*, 176.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4. 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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787 what might come. He was not arrogant toward the helping powers—far from it—he was grateful for the help they could extend to him. He knew that he could not well do without that help, but was confident that it was forthcoming. The spirits were beneficent. They gave of their power, not in compassion but in altruism.

776 787 The regular pattern called for the candidate to remain at his solitary watch for four days and nights, but the quest might be prolonged. He remained until he received a vision, or else abandoned the quest to try again at a later time when conditions were more propitious. The vigil was completed with a vision or hallucination which made known to the candidate his personal and individual magic medium, the mysterious bond between him and that supernatural power which would henceforth act as the helping guardian of his destiny. A wind rustling through a pass or the timber, the bark of a dog, the howl of a wolf, the scream of an eagle might end the quest and send the candidate home to offer thanks to his newly found guardian spirit.

The newly acquired guardian spoke and understood the language of his ward and possessed special attributes or powers which it could transfer. On the fourth night of his search, Yellowfish heard a voice as distinctly, he vows, as if some person were standing near and speaking to him. "Tomorrow morning go take a bath in the creek below, and then go towards the east until you see a one-year-old buffalo coming across a ravine." He followed the instructions minutely and met the one-year-old buffalo crossing the ravine. Thereafter Yellowfish possessed the medicine of the one-year-old buffalo.[3]

784 787 During the revelation, the guardian spirit emphasized certain tabus and procedures which his ward must carefully follow; otherwise the medicine either would not work or would cause evil. Medicine is power, and power is not to be handled casually. Among tabus commonly noted was one in connection with medicine men's eating certain foods, or at least eating them only under certain conditions. Should anyone walk behind a medicine man while he was eating, he was certain to become ill or lose his power, unless he had "heap big medicine."[4] All medicines had to be protected from grease and the ill effects of menstruating women. Eagle medicine men could not per-

[3] Informant: Yellowfish.
[4] Informant: Medicine Woman.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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mit anyone to pass behind them while they were eating because an eagle is upset by such an act. Post Oak Jim, in explaining this, said that he once had two captive eagles who took to eating back to back so as to prevent this possibility.

The newly gained power was generally referred to as "making medicine." The identification of certain powers was a life-and-death secret. Without the consent of this power, the possessor could not talk about it. The possession of power entailed serious responsibility, lest it cause harm rather than good. The owner must have faith, otherwise his power might not work. Practically every power carried with it one or more songs which the possessor had to learn and which were usually revealed during the visions. The possessor of strong medicine could, therefore, have quite a number of songs which he had to be able to sing at all times. It was not unusual in a Comanche camp to see a medicine man go out from his tipi after the evening meal, lie flat on his back, and to the music or time of a rattle sing his songs over and over again.

By association, medicines were usually similar in some respects to notable qualities possessed by the prototype of the bestowing guardian spirit. Therefore, the medicine bag which contained the material substance that served as a medium for consultation with the guardian spirit was likely to contain a great variety of objects identified with its source of the power. Among its contents might be a handful of sweet grass, certain herbs, a deer's tail, a bird's claw, small stones, the gristle of a bear snout, the dried maw of a buffalo, the skins of certain animals, particularly the buffalo, bear, or otter, plumes of certain birds, beaver oil, a smooth, round, hard ball sometimes found in the stomach of a buffalo, and so on without end. Each had a use; the sweet grass was protective; the herbs possessed healing power; the bird's claws inspired dash and courage; the stones brought health and long life since they do not wear out; the small ball from the buffalo's stomach, which this animal was believed to have swallowed, not only added great strength to its possessor but rendered him invincible in battle. These stones were reported to have been as much as three inches in diameter.[5]

[5] Battey, *op. cit.*, 332–33; Burnet, "American Aborigines, Indians of Texas," *loc. cit.*, Vol. I (May 22, 1824), 162.

The Comanches

757 The vapor bath or sweat lodge was used extensively in medical treatment as in the cure of Breaks Something.

789 Beyond curing and lending their protective power to others, the Comanche medicine men served to make rain and as seers. The rain-making medicine of Big Bear called for the use of an outside tail feather of a black eagle. With his power it was necessary only to dip the feather into water and sprinkle towards the sun four times. "A cloud will soon appear and shortly it will rain." Big Bear overdid it once when living in a tipi northeast of Cache, Oklahoma. He made medicine for a rain with some wind in it. Came a cloud. It grew bigger. Then came rain and a big wind that blew his tipi down. "His wife got after him for not asking for a nice, soft rain."[16]

●787 A seer might be called upon to learn the fate of overdue war parties. In one simple method the medicine man "dreamed" on it and gave the answer in the morning. The other method was a regular séance. Post Oak Jim's account of such a séance is as follows.

« « « A war party was gone for a long time; they wanted to find out about it.

The medicine man had them clean up a nice place on the ground for a special tipi west of the camp. He selected about seven special men to go in with him. The camp was ordered to remain quiet. He had a fire built, and they went in just before midnight. They smoked and told the medicine man what they wanted to know.

He told them to put out the fire and close the smoke vent from outside.

Then he put on his blanket and went out into the night. He made a call. From way off an answer came back. He called again; the answering call was closer. He called a third time; it was closer yet. On his fourth call the answer was near by.

Then he re-entered the tipi and sat down.

"Everyone remain quiet," he told them. "The ghost is coming. That was his call."

The ghost, in the form of a bird, lit on top of the tipi. They could hear it was heavy.

From inside the tipi, the medicine man talked to it. "What we

[16] Informant: Slope.

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want to know is what has become of these people on the war party. 787 ●
You are wonderful. You know everything.

The answer came in a clear voice—

"They are all killed."

A sickly man with them asked if he would get well.

"You will die in the fall," came the answer.

Then they asked the bird who he was. It was the spirit of an evil medicine man who had died of tuberculosis.

After a while one of them went out to open the flaps of the tipi.

He came back in to light the fire.

They could hear the ghost calling as he went. That was all. » » »

This is the Algonquian spirit séance without the shaking of the tent at the visitation of the spirit. Inasmuch as the northern Shoshones did not have this rite, it is probable that it was borrowed from the neighboring Cheyennes.[17]

Ghosts did not generally bother the Comanches, but the Co- 775
manches definitely were uneasy about them. The tabu on the use of the names of dead people has already been mentioned several times. Hunters, raiders, and campers often saw and heard groups of people who were there one moment and gone the next. They were ghosts who haunted battlefields or scenes of annihilation.

Ghosts gave great power to the men who could stand up to them. Such ghosts appeared either as bare-bone skeletons or as bloody, scalped spectres waving long knives. Several stories are told of men who were chased all the way home from their vision vigils right into their own tipis by terrifying ghosts, who came with the rising moon.

Not all ran away, however. Slope knew one who got ghost power.

« « « A bunch of Comanches camped near a haunted spot. They asked a young man to go down to the spring for water. He just stalled around.

"Are you afraid?" They asked him.

He said he wasn't, so he took up a cow paunch and started for the water, thinking about ghosts. He heard something behind him; then he felt arms about his neck; he could see only bones—no flesh on

[17] Cf. K. N. Llewellyn and E. A. Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence*, 91.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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796 755 184 tenuated ritual than that of Post Oak Jim's, which has been presented here. *Kɔwino* said that he described the ceremony as it was performed in later years. That's It, a Water Horse, had heard about the Beaver Ceremony, but had never seen it because it was not performed in his band.

787 796 Of the dances used by the Comanches in search of power, the Eagle Dance was outstanding. It was sponsored by a prominent member of the band, usually the father or uncle of a youth turning warrior. The sponsor sought out a medicine man with strong eagle or war power and offered a smoke. If the medicine man accepted, he assumed complete charge of the ceremony. The decision was for him a serious one. If he accepted, his own power would be diminished somewhat, since it would be spread among the dancers. On the other hand a refusal might be interpreted as lack of confidence in his own power, as fear to risk spreading it out. In such a case, the medicine man would suffer loss of prestige among his own people. Furthermore, there was the factor of remuneration. Relatives and friends of participants contributed gifts. The medicine leader could keep what he preferred for himself, leaving the remainder for the dancers.

After the medicine man accepted the request, he announced the time and place of the ceremony. He and the dancers arose before daylight, went to the creek, bathed, stripped to the breechclout, put on war paint, let their hair down and put eagle feathers in it, and rubbed themselves with sage. After that they sat in a semicircle, with the opening toward the east, and smoked ceremoniously.

When the smoking was over, the leader arose and, followed closely by the dancers, sneaked silently to a near-by camp to "capture" a girl. Spectators remained some distance apart. In the old days the girl had to be a captive. The girl's family made a pretense of defending their camp against the attacking party, but the "victorious raiders" carried the "captured" girl to their own camp where preparations had been made for the remainder of the ceremony.

[801] A tipi or brush lodge was used. The medicine leader provided two, four, or six drummers and singers to help—never an odd number. They sat close together facing the east. The girl sat beside the leader. The dancers first assumed a position directly in front, facing east, but when the music began, they formed a circle around the musicians.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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Each dancer carried in his right hand a rattle, decorated with feathers, paint, and beads; and in his left hand he carried a wand or fan prepared from the wing feathers of an eagle. The dancers were young eagles attempting to leave their nest and parental care in order to soar away, masters of the sky. The dancers did not sing, but attempted from time to time to imitate the cry of the young eagle. When a dancer lagged or wearied, the leader either blew his eagle-bone whistle as a warning for him to speed up or reinvigorated him with new power by waving the eagle fan above him. When the music ceased, the dancers dropped on their knees and sat back against their legs to rest, but the moment the music resumed they sprang to their feet and began dancing again. 787 ● 796

Between dances a warrior would rush into the circle and recite an outstanding coup or deed which he had performed. At the close of his recital a deafening applause of yells, drum beats, gourd rattles, and the stamping of feet went up. These speeches were like pep talks to encourage the young dancers to acts of bravery. During the dance, the warriors of the girl's people rushed up and made a sham attempt to recapture her. In actual practice they rushed in and recited some coups of their own. These recitals had to be true, because the power of eagle medicine was so strong that misfortune would befall any who on this solemn occasion falsified the facts. Spectators looked on in reverential silence.

About mid-morning, the mother of one of the dancers brought water for the participants and set it down near the circle. The leader drank and then offered the water to the dancers, each drinking in turn and passing it to the one on his left. After the "failure" of the girl's relatives to recapture her, they brought in presents, which they deposited before her in the circle. Relatives and friends of the dancers might also provide some of the gifts.

The medicine man retained a portion of the presents and gave the others to the dancers. One informant had received a horse when he danced. Not infrequently a dancer went through the ceremony without gaining power. "There had to be something inside stretching and pleading, reaching and grasping for power, if it were to be obtained."

The dance ended shortly before midday. No ceremonial departure

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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787 796 is remembered, but the feather wands and rattles used by the dancers were given to the girl, and then the dancers rushed to the creek to bathe. They dived into the water upstream four times. They then dressed in their best attire and returned to camp to partake of a feast prepared by the women.[20]

The Medicine Dance reported by J. Lee Humfreville was probably a slight variation of the Eagle Dance. Unfortunately Humfreville gave few details, but in those there are only two significant points of difference: the ceremony he witnessed began in the afternoon and ended late in the night, and the dancers carried their medicine bags during the ceremony.[21]

796 224 All attempts to piece together a definite picture of the Buffalo Hunting Dance have been almost futile thus far. One informant was of the opinion that it was the most important communal ceremony. Others were aware of its existence, but remembered none of its ritual or symbolism. Apparently it varied much in form and detail from tribe to tribe. It was rarely held, and only when the camp was in desperate need of buffalo for food or other necessities. It was a band or village affair, under the supervision of a shaman who possessed buffalo medicine. The dance was a prayer to the guardian spirit to direct the buffalo in plentiful numbers to their hunting grounds. Furthermore, the participants danced for power to be successful in the chase. Those going on the hunt could participate. Usually the dance was held in the main camp on the evening before the departure of the hunting party, but if buffalo were scarce, the hunting party sometimes danced after leaving camp. The dancers wore masks made of the whole skin of the buffalo head with the horns left attached.

276 796 Smoking was also associated with power, as has already been demonstrated in the accounts of curing; it was therefore a sacred and ceremonious act. It is true that the Comanches smoked for pleasure, but never casually; and when smoking ceremoniously, it was an oath, a signature to an agreement, a pledge on the part of the smoker, or a prayer for power. In smoking for pleasure, they customarily used

[20] Informant: Yellowfish. Yellowfish danced the Eagle Dance when he was a young man. On another occasion the ceremony was observed by the Reverend John Melville while visiting the Comanche chief, Talaquitnamse, in the Wichita Mountains. Melville's unsatisfactory account of the ceremony is related in Barnes, *op. cit.*, 55–57.

[21] Humfreville, *Twenty Years among Our Savage Indians*, 438.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945)1952
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The Comanches

776
787
825

The coyote was regarded by the Comanches as a brother, who often warned those who possessed power to speak and understand its language, of impending trouble. "Coyote medicine was for knowing things ahead or in the future."

When Skinny and Wrinkled was staying with an old man north of Medicine Park, Oklahoma, the old fellow asked him one night, "Well, have you heard from our friend yet?" Skinny and Wrinkled had heard nothing. The old man admonished him, "Well, you better listen hard now. I believe he is coming around pretty soon."

Not long after, they were talking one night when the dogs began to bark. The old man told Skinny and Wrinkled to shut them up. "I believe there's our friend."

Sure enough, there was a coyote howling.

"I could not interpret what he was saying, but the old man could."

"You better start saving up your bread," was his version of the message. "He says there is going to be a hard winter this year. We aren't going to have much to eat."

That is the way it was, according to Skinny and Wrinkled. The winter before, the Comanches had more flour than they knew what to do with. That winter there were hardly enough rations to give them what was due them.

The coyote also predicted good fortune. One night a coyote howled, and at breakfast the mother of Skinny and Wrinkled said it was telling the tribe that they were all going to get a lot of money soon. Her husband, who was quite a skeptic, laughed and said, "How do you know?"

She insisted, however, and warned, "You wait and see. If the old man talks again before the week is out, it sure is coming true."

On Friday they heard him again. The very next day there were checks for $180 each at the agency for every member of the tribe.[16]

If, when the Indians were on a journey, a coyote jumped up before them, looked at them, and barked or howled, they would likely change their course and travel no farther in that direction that day. A friendly spirit in the form of a wolf was warning them of danger,

[15] Gene Weltfish, "The Man Who Married a Buffalo Wife, A Comanche Story," *Caddoan Texts* (*Publications* of the American Ethnological Society, XVII), 218–23.

[16] Informant: Yellowfish.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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and they must heed the warning. The enemy was generally found just where the coyote told them.

Eagles possessed power in matters concerning war. Because of this power their feathers were attached to shields, worn tied in the hair, and during the later period they were placed on the war bonnet. Owing to the protective power of the bird, those wearing the feathers believed that they would not be hit by either bullets or arrows.[17] When eagle feathers were attached to the shield, it could not be pierced by either bullets or arrows. The Comanches secured a part of their feathers by taking young eagles from their nests and keeping them in captivity. (Young eagles were easily kept by tethering them by the legs to a pin driven in the ground.) After the eagles had reached full size, they pulled out the tail feathers. War whistles were made from wing bones of eagles.

[231]

The deer had much power which might be used for good or evil. It had the power to cause or cure disease. It could say to its favorite: "Of all things on this earth that step on the ground, there is nothing that beats me in running. By that save yourself in time of trouble." At times it was a helper in love affairs. Possibly because the elk had great vitality and was hard to kill, it was credited with having great strength which could be transmitted to those whose guardian spirit it happened to be. The bear possessed power to cure wounds. The skunk possessed great power. Doctors used its hide to hold their medicine. Men tied its tail to their horses' tails in war. For a member of a war party to kill and skin a skunk while on the way to attack was likely to nullify some of the most powerful war medicine.[18] The roadrunner had the power to reinvigorate and give speed, since it was a speedy bird. The owl was unpopular, for it brought bad news, but the Comanches never shrank nearly so much with fear and horror at the sound of its hoot as did the Kiowas. The wolf gave power to walk barefoot on the cold snow. Medicine men who had this power painted the flesh between their toes red like that of the wolf. And if a person would howl like a wolf before eating red haws, there was no danger of foundering on them.

In like manner, in an ever lessening degree, practically all animals

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] This was the reason attributed by the leader for the failure at Adobe Walls.

6: Linton E-5 (1933)1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

THE COMANCHE SUN DANCE

By RALPH LINTON

THE last Comanche Sun Dance was held in 1878, the date being fixed with certainty by an eclipse of the sun visible in Oklahoma in the same year. Even before this time the ceremony seems to have been falling into disuse, due perhaps to the harassed life which the tribe had led during the preceding twenty years. One informant had attended this last dance as a small child, but his memories of it were vague and the account given here must be understood to be based on second hand evidence.[1]

Whether the Sun Dance was ever a regular annual ceremony among the Comanche is uncertain. From at least 1860 on it was held at irregular intervals, whenever some individual received the necessary supernatural sanction. It also seems highly improbable that the whole tribe ever attended a single Sun Dance. The autonomy of the various bands within the tribe was complete and there was little feeling of solidarity among them. Participation seems normally to have been limited to the band of the supervising medicine man with a few others who were in close and friendly contact with it and who came by invitation. Informants frequently described the dance as though only four bands were involved, but this was probably nothing more than a projection of the pattern of using four as a ritualistic number.

Every dance originated in a supernatural sanction received by some medicine man. This was probably in the form of a dream or vision, although informants were not certain. The originator was usually a young man who was just beginning his career. Those who volunteered to dance were also, as a rule, young men who had few war exploits to their credit. It was said that their subsequent careers would be watched to determine whether the sanction received by the medicine man was authentic and that his reputation would be strongly influenced by their success or failure. The medicine man had complete charge of the ceremony, arranging all the details in accordance with his sanction. From the differences in the accounts given by various informants it seems certain that there was a good deal of variation in the procedure, extending even to differences in the form of the lodge used on different occasions.

The ceremony was held approximately in midsummer and continued for eight days, the first four being devoted to the gathering of materials

[1] The present notice seems to be the first report of the Sun Dance among the Comanche. There are, in fact, specific statements of its nonoccurrence in W. P. Clark, Indian Sign Language (Philadelphia, 1885) and James Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians (Seventeenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Part 1, 1900), p. 322.

[pp 1-419 not processed]

6: Linton E-5 (1933) 1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

Apparently the purpose of the ceremony was partly to increase the importance of the medicine man, who remained the central figure throughout, partly to improve the well being of the whole group, especially their physical health. The dancers, as a result of their participation, received an increase in their supernatural power, but they seem to have drawn this from the medicine man rather than directly from the Sun, the Eagle, or any other supernatural being. This would be in accordance with the general Comanche pattern of obtaining power from other individuals more frequently than they obtained it by direct contact with supernatural beings. Visions might come to the dancers during the dance, but these were in the nature of unusual benefits not specifically sought for or expected. The only instance of such a vision which informants remembered was not that of a dancer but that of a man who impersonated the old bull in the initial ceremony of driving in the buffalo. At the end of the chase this man was so exhausted that, when he started out of the lodge, he partially lost consciousness and had to cling to the center pole. When he came to he told the people that he had had a vision of a white man with long white curly hair. The Comanche believe that this was Jesus, although it happened before missionaries had come among them. As they had had Christian Mexican captives living among them from at least 1750 on, they were probably familiar with Christian ideology even at that time. Since the Comanche are not secretive with regard to their visions or other supernatural experiences, the fact that this is the only Sun Dance vision remembered would indicate that such visions were very rare.

There is documentary evidence that the Comanche did not reach their historic territory until about 1700 and it seems highly probable that they had emerged from the northern plateau area only a few generations before. It is certain that during the historic period they were actively engaged in borrowing elements of Plains culture from their neighbors and that certain of these elements had not been perfectly assimilated at the time of their final subjugation. I believe that the rather wide range of variation in certain details of the Sun Dance, such as the form of the lodge, can best be explained by the assumption that the Comanche had not had the Sun Dance long enough to establish a complete and integrated pattern for the ceremony. If so, many of the details of particular Sun Dances might be determined largely by the officiating medicineman's knowledge of the Sun Dance rituals of neighboring tribes, especially the Kiowa and Cheyenne. Most of the older informants were familiar with the Kiowa Sun Dance and considered their own as very much the same. The use of a fan of roadrunner feathers to invigorate the dancers was cited as a specific identity. At the same time,

553 tutionalized joking relationship, such nick-
551 names were usually given by an in-law,
602 and more frequently than not were deroga-
tory or had some sexual or obscene reference.

553 A young man would often receive a new name after he had proven himself on his first war party. Or, a young warrior, who aspired to the name of an old man who had been a famous warrior, could ask permission of the oldster to become his namesake. The old man might then put the youth to the test of equalling a feat well remembered by the people. If the youth met the test, the old man would be compelled to give up his illustrious name and use a former one.

533 In earlier times names along with other
787 gifts were bestowed through visitations by
776 supernatural spirits who were sought out
[178] by fasting and dreaming in secluded places. This practice, however, seems to have been in eclipse as early as 1870, although many older Comanche still bear names given them
551 by their guardian spirits. Thus, Comanche
181 names may be characterized as varied and highly individual, a fact which reflects Comanche emphasis on the worth and variety of the individual personality.

551 6.2. By a study of the 2394 Comanche
177 names on the January 1940 census rolls
[161] one may trace, from the older through the younger generations, the adoption of the White system of patronymics and the consequent displacement of the native naming patterns described above. This shift was accomplished largely within the past seventy-odd years dating from the early reservation period. Rollcalls, the taking of vital statistics and census data, intermarriage with Whites, rationing, attendance at schools and churches, orthodox baptisms, trading, and the casual bestowal of personal names by the Whites were all factors instrumental in the change.

551 Although the rolls were called every three
177 days, the men by name and the women and
657 children by count, as early as 1875, the first formal census was taken in 1890 and names of Indians "had to be definitely decided

[p. 244-A]

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6

682 It was an absolute privilege-right, which not even her family would move [593] to challenge.

On the other hand, for one Comanche male to kill another was never 682 a privilege-right, even when applying force to an over-stubborn defendant. 627 Any willful killing required a revenge killing of the slayer. Here was the fatal weakness of Comanche law, as indeed of so much primitive law. The culture provided right ways of procedure and defined the substance of 602 tortious acts. But the primacy of the kin group came to the fore whenever 682 a prosecutor felt he had pushed negotiation as far as it would carry and 627 then had taken recourse to arms. The kin of the defendant whom he had killed did not accept the killing, although general public opinion may have held that the victim had it coming to him. The Comanche kinsmen took revenge on the prosecutor regardless of the rightness of his original grievance. In enforcing the law he lost his life, a victim of *lex talionis*.

However much Comanche law fell short in this respect, custom [518] remedied the defect in another. Blood-revenge killing was only of the first killer and retaliation did not lead to feud. The kinship principle, while extant, was nevertheless weak among the Comanches, and general fighting within the tribe was not to be countenanced when there were always outside enemies to be confronted. The killer, and the killer alone, had to die. There it stopped. No religious sanction, no tribal authority, was necessary to suppress the feuding tendency. Custom was sufficient restraint, and in this the Comanches were fortunate, for thereby they escaped the self-renewing curse that plagues so many primitive law systems.

Willful killing of a man's favorite horse was an act akin to murder, 685 especially if the horse had been bequeathed to him by a best friend. Re- 627 taliation was taken not in killing the favorite horse of the transgressor but [825] in slaying the transgressor himself. A favorite horse had a legal personality and was equated with a human being. Consequently, no further blood revenge followed, for things were already equal: a man for a horse.

Every Comanche male at one time or another went on a vision quest 781 in search of power. He did not abase himself before the supernatural spirits or masochistically mutilate and torture himself to arouse their compassion. 776 Nor did he weep before them to arouse their pity. Unlike the tribesmen 789 of the Plains to the north, he assumed that the spirits were generally benign toward him; they needed no coaxing to share the benefits of their power with him. If he fasted and waited in a lonely place, they would help him. 776 Nor did they interfere in his daily living except as they put conditions on the use of the power they gave him. A Comanche had to observe no super- 784 natural tabus save those that went with his own personal medicine. Under Postulate VIII, A most Comanche medicine men used their powers to help 756 the people. They cured and used their medicine to bring success in war 789 and the hunt. They even, for a contractual consideration, helped others

A [See category 181, p. 69--Analyst]

/page 39 continued/

C K 795 177 C K [787] consider here how the attitudes toward peyote itself have changed. The meeting as I have seen it conforms in most details to the descriptions given by Mooney, LaBarre, and Slotkin, allowing of course for regional variations. On the other hand there seems to be a marked change in the effects of peyote. Less importance is attached to the vision and there is hardly any evidence of people passing out, etc.

C K 787 177 [756] Many of the older peyotists also had power of the older sort and even John Pahdoponi and Bill Saupitty have been healers apart from their peyote functions. I have asked concerning the fate of the old forms of power working on the supposition that if it were real it would not have dissappeared into thin air in the minds of the present day peyotists. It seems that power came to an individual through the intervention of the supernatural being in those specific situations we may call quests. Due to the coming of the White culture, the proper conditions for the quest were destroyed, i.e., sanctified areas, silence, natural surroundings. The Wichita Mountains were

C K 823 778 [787] the traditional areas for receiving power. The bands did not camp in the mountains, nor did they travel through them on their way to raid or war. This holy ground was open for small day light excursions (berry picking, etc.) and for inter-tribal travel along the "peace trail". Other than these activities the area was respected as holy

C K 823 778 177 [775] and used only for the search for power. In spite of the changes since the White inroads, many of the mountains are considered haunted and ghosts still abound in popular Comanche and Kiowa parlance. The older Indians do not travel far into the mountains and do not camp out there. Dreams are still a great topic of interest in spite of the

C K 787 fact that they cannot confer power. One is liable to dream more often and more vividly while in the mountains. The dream is still able to impart a message if the dreamer is able to interpret it.

C K 276 795 778 [787] Peyote, in the early days, also had power. This because of its manifest healing properties and because of the visions one could

/page 39 continued/

get. In the days before the first World War there were many special peyote meetings from which the young men were barred. In these meetings power contests were held, almost as a form of sport. The miraculous was common place, miracles, healing and the forseeing of the future. But this strong power of peyote, like that found on the quest, has almost completely dissappeared. The power possessed by the older men had to be handed down, and the communal power of peyote depended upon strong faith. Not only has the continuity of the power broken down but the power of peyote which does not depend upon teaching has also weakened considerably. Moreover, the younger people do not take the religion very seriously. I have posed the question of whether the increasing concern with power and faith which comes with old age does not offset this trend considerably. My informants answers are instructive.

In the traditional Comanche culture the young men were concerned only with war power and only rarely with healing and wisdom. But they did not deny the validity of the power which naturally came to the aged. When an older man felt that a younger one was ready to learn his power that honour was almost invariably accepted. But in the period from 1900 through 1920 the young men were not only frustrated but were also con-/40/fronted with the White system which seemed more powerful. As a result they went through a period of not believing in the traditional forms of power. They refused to learn when the old men offered to teach and the old men often refused to teach before they died because they distrusted the ways of the younger generation. In spite of the fact that this generation changed as it reached middle age, and came to value the traditional culture and to believe in the old forms of power, the chain had been broken and there was no way to retrieve what had been broken and there was no way to retrieve what had been lost in youth. Many became more serious about Peyote but this was never enough to regain the power and faith of the past.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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malevolent spirits of the dead and the Medicine of the potential eagle doctor. Kardiner's (1945:93) observation that, among the Comanche, "Medicine" is merely a euphemism for "courage" is pertinent, for the ghost's major weapon against the neophyte doctor is fear. It is interesting that although the behavior engaged in during these four days and nights of solitude is similar to the general pattern of Plains vision questing, Sanapia conceives of this time as merely a final test and not a time when a supernatural patron could have possibly appeared to her and granted her certain supernatural prerogatives. The apparition of her patron, the eagle, would come later in her career as a doctor. In the beginning of her doctoring career, the powers which she possessed came strictly from a personal power transmission from her mother and uncle to her. Sanapia feels that visitations from either the eagle, or at times from the spirits of her mother and uncle, are gifts granted her as a reward for her faith and conscientious endeavors as a doctor.

Power Transmission

The first stage in the actual power transmission from the mother was concerned with instilling power into Sanapia's mouth and hands, the areas of the body where an eagle doctor's powers are most strongly represented. The rituals involved with this first phase of transmission are very similar to the blessing ceremony, at least in the introductory stages. Sanapia's brother was told by the mother to lay a fire of pecan wood. After the wood burned to coals, the brother brought the coals to a secluded place where Sanapia and her mother waited. The mother sat facing east, and Sanapia was instructed to sit facing her, while the mound of coals burned between them. Sanapia was cedared[1] and fanned by her mother with the standard blessings of long life and good health. This blessing also included the mother's singing of her Medicine song, an action which serves to call the *puhakut*'s power sources to his service. The mother, using her bare hand, then plucked a live coal from the mound of embers and handed it to Sanapia. At first, Sanapia reports, she balked at placing the burning coal in her hand, but at her mother's insistence she took it and was amazed that it did not burn her. She was then instructed to rub the coal over her hands. Once again the similarity in the concepts of "Medicine" and "courage" appear. Today, Sanapia interprets the handling of live coals as an act of faith in the doctor, a necessary first step in testing the potential doctor's resolve.

> I was sure scared then . . . almost got up and ran away. I was only a young girl at that time, you know. But, when I took them coals on my hand, inside and outside my hand I felt a chill, maybe. Oh, it was like chills in my hands. That has the meaning that power was in there . . . working in my hands. Felt like it would go up my arm even.

[1] The dried leaves of the red cedar are sprinkled on live coals, and the rising smoke is wafted over the person who is being blessed.

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eggs, but it always feel like I'm choking in here and I just quit eating them. And now I can't get the taste out of my mouth. I'll have it all day long. I just can't eat them.

Sanapia's maternal uncle gave her but one "rule." She was forbidden to eat the visceral organs of animals. This was a bitter pill for Sanapia because of her love for liver and an Indian delicacy made from stuffed intestines. She has managed to circumvent this tabu by reinterpreting it. Sanapia feels that if she changes these forbidden meats into something else, disguises them, she can eat them with no fear or guilt.

A *puhakut* cannot doctor himself in the manner which was described regarding the removal of the eagle egg. This is unfortunate for Sanapia, for as she grows older, the tabus which she must observe become increasingly cumbersome; and since she is the only living eagle doctor, she has no way in which to relieve herself of these restrictions. This is also a reason for her disinclination to associate with the less traditionally based members of the Comanche tribe. The more conservative and traditional Comanches recognizing the special limitations which are placed on Sanapia's behavior and, honoring them, make her life a little less complicated. With the less traditionally oriented, Sanapia cannot be sure that they understand the meaning of her tabus, and thus she must be constantly on guard around them lest they pass behind her while she is eating, for example, and unknowingly, or perhaps knowingly, cause her to break one of the many restrictions placed on her with regards to food and behavior. Sanapia states that ignorance is no excuse when a "rule" is broken. Her tabus are mechanical.

The unique feature in the third power transmission was Sanapia's acquisition of her Medicine song. The Medicine song is Sanapia's most direct means of communication to the supernatural realms which are the ultimate sources of her power. The song belonged to both the mother and the uncle. Sanapia considers her Medicine song extremely potent and utilizes it only under the most critical and pressing of doctoring situations. It is not a common element in her doctoring activities but is only employed when she feels that all her other tactics are failing. The song is her ultimate doctoring tool in that it is as close as she comes to actually commanding her power sources to heed her wishes.

The immediate result of her Medicine song is the summoning of the spirits of her mother and uncle. She then asks them for support in her attempts to reach more deeply into the supernaturalistic realms for more power and control over the situation which is challenging her.

When my mother gave me that song she told me, "When you come by yourself like that, when you don't have no place to go for help, when you got no one to lean on for help, sing this song. What you want, you going to get. I'll be listening to you. When you sing this song, I'm going to hear you singing and I'm going to help you."

Two tabus concerned with behavior were associated with the power increase of this third stage. Sanapia was forbidden to ever directly make a request of another. Her powers would, according to her mother, allow her to obtain anything

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115 159 756 778 age, was tired of her profession and its rigors. She felt, perhaps, that she could excuse her inactivity in doctoring to the fact that her daughter possessed her powers. In other words, the mother's behavior could possibly have been based on circumstance, though Sanapia now interprets it as a law to be observed in transmission of power from a donor to a recipient. Sanapia is also in agreement that this type of rule does not make good sense. However, she explains that she does not understand many things which she does in her capacity as doctor. It is enough for Sanapia that her mother and uncle told her to keep the Medicine way, so she attempts to keep it, even if she does not understand certain aspects of the

115 159 756 role she inherited. A practical aspect of what Sanapia considers one of the more senseless of her rules of behavior concerns the method she must follow in choosing a successor. As a woman, her first choice of successor would be her favorite

[88] daughter. However, at this point if she gave her Medicine to her daughter and then ceased doctoring herself, as she feels she must, it would be approximately twenty years before the Comanches would again have an eagle doctor in their midst, that is, until after the daughter passes menopause. During this time the

115 159 756 special prerogatives of her Medicine way could probably be taken over by peyotism, as she has seen occur among the neighboring Kiowa. It is significant that she does consider herself in competition with peyote doctors.

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> Those Kiowa got this old man that doctors with peyote but he don't get people with twisted-face well . . . sometimes he don't get anybody well. That's what I heard. I even got some of those peoples that go to him . . . they come to me later on and I fix them up. Peyote is good but some things can't get well with it. I can do things that they can't do because I got that power. People learn that and then I see them . . . come to me. Us Comanches got two brothers that doctor with peyote too. That's all they use. There's a young man down at Walters but nobody pay him any attention. He just says he got power but I want to know where he got it from. Nobody knows that so . . . well, he's just a young man.

Dreams and Visions

115 159 756 787 [828] Shortly after Sanapia began her doctoring career, she had her first "real dream." She distinguishes between ordinary dreams, which she considers generally unimportant, and real dreams, to which she attributes enough importance that she will be motivated to certain kinds of behavior by them. The first dream experience occurred after she appealed to the eagle, while doctoring, to supply her with a special Medicine feather.

> This man, something like a man, came to where I was sleeping way in the night. He stood there and then held his hand to me. I just watch him, you know. I wasn't scared or nothing. Then he move his arm toward north and all at once I saw his arm go away from him. And next morning I said, "You all know what, I'm sure lonesome to see my uncle. He's up north around Geary. Let's go see him, if you all want to." Here we pack up and beat it down

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there north. And we was coming. We visit him about four days or five days. I said, "Uncle, we going home now." He said, "Why?" and I told him, "Just feel I get home and get my check." Then he went back and opened up his suitcase and said, "Come here," and I went. He had about twelve eagle feathers and he told me to take one I want best. I pulled out the best one in the bunch, and he said, "That's for you. Take it with you." And so that feather, what I dream about was given to me by my uncle. That's what that dream, really good dream, carried with it.

A recurring real dream comes to Sanapia which, in its essentials, is similar to the one just mentioned. The man appears to her at night and extends his hand to her. In the palm of his hand is a peyote button which covers the entire area of his palm, even fusing with his hand. He instructs Sanapia to take it from him. Her first several efforts are futile, for as she reaches for the peyote, it disappears. Finally, she is successful in taking the peyote from the man's hand. As soon as she grasps it in both hands, the peyote enters her hands and spreads a chill or tingling sensation through her hands and arms. Sanapia equates the tingling sensation with supernatural power.

Sanapia is not consistent in statements concerning her opinion of the identity of the man in her real dreams. At times she identifies him as the spirit of her maternal uncle, at times as "something that's helping," and at other times as the "peyote man." The identity of the man seems of little concern to her. The significant part of the dream to her is her magical acquisition of the peyote's power.

During peyote meetings she has had several experiences which she considers similar to her real dreams. The central theme of all these peyote experiences is the same: The peyote tells Sanapia that through its power she can accomplish anything she desires. The following account is typical. It also contains, once again, the peyote–hand motif. The gigantic size she attains relative to those around her is another recurring element in these peyote experiences.

> And you know, that night, oh, I ate so much of that peyote, and I just feel good. Then, when I look, all the people sitting around in the tepee like that, everybody was way down right under my feet, and I was above them. I was sitting on top of them. That's how the peyote affect me in my body. And I said, "I wonder why they sitting down there and me sitting up here?" And I look this way and my boy was sitting here and I said, "Look at these peoples sitting down there and I'm sitting up here. Here's your head right here and you're sitting way down there too. I wonder why?" He said, "Mama, you eat too much of that peyote." And you know, I close my eyes and when I look at my hand, I had a big peyote there, as big as my hand. It was just sitting there, I said, "Look son, look what I got. Look at this peyote." He said, "Mama, I don't see anything there." But everytime I look, there it is. It was great peyote with green and with real pretty designs on it. And somehow it said, "Go ahead, use this and you could just do anything you want with it. You could just doctor anybody you want and they going to be alright. Right now you could doctor that one." But he didn't name anybody out. Come into my mind like that. "Right now you could just go out there and do as you please with this peyote. You infected with it so strong you could just raise a sick-bed man or woman or child. You could raise a dead man." It just came into my mind like that.

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Visitations from the Medicine Eagle

115 159 756 825 787 [533] Sanapia has had only two visitations from her supernatural eagle patron in her doctoring career. Both occurred during doctoring situations as a direct result of the singing of her Medicine song. Sanapia reports that her Medicine eagle looks like eagles she has seen in the wild except that it is much larger. She can feel her eagle's presence before she sees it. On the first occasion she felt a rush of air from its wings, and on the second it was a tingling sensation which announced the presence of the Medicine eagle. Sanapia states that when the eagle came to her, everything around her dissappeared with the resultant image: an eagle against a murky gray background. These visitations were very brief. During the eagle's apparition, it appeared to be hovering directly in front of her at a distance of about 4 or 5 feet. While the eagle was present, Sanapia trembled violently and perspired freely. She states that her heart beat very rapidly and she felt as if she was going to faint.

Contacts with the Supernatural

115 159 756 787 [775] Sanapia has provided herself with several contacts with the supernatural worlds. Since she cannot visit the other worlds, Sanapia must depend on these contacts to assist her in making her wishes known to the supernatural realms. Her comments concerning her Medicine song clearly identify the spirits of her mother and maternal uncle as her two major assistants. It should also be remembered that she considers her Medicine song as her most potent piece of doctoring paraphernalia. The spirit–man in her recurring real dreams is also a liaison or avenue of rapport between Sanapia and the supernatural, though in this case it is strictly a one-way phenomenon which is beyond Sanapia's control.

115 159 756 787 533 775 Sanapia's eagle comes to her only through the intercession of her mother and uncle via Sanapia's Medicine song. She associates her lack of courage in the final phase of her doctor training with her inability to call the eagle to her aid independently of her mother's and uncle's intercession. This is also the reason why Sanapia possesses only one Medicine song instead of the many which her mother and uncle possessed. In the final analysis, Sanapia can rarely act independently as a doctor; she must call on the assistance of her teachers. Therefore, instead of having many songs for summoning power, she has one. She must first call on her mother and uncle and then relate to them her wishes, which they, through their superior powers, actualize. Basically, then, Sanapia's real power is the control which she can exert over the powerful spirits of two *puhakuts*. However, this type of analysis is foreign to Sanapia. She prefers to think of herself as the pitiable supplicant.

115 159 756 787 755 Peyote is another important liaison with supernatural powers. The power she receives from peyote is the only power which she can manipulate entirely independently of the spirits of her mother and uncle. Still, the power of peyote is subordinate to the powers possessed by the spirits of her mother and uncle,

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and in her most difficult doctoring situations and in all her most criticial moments, it is to the spirits of her teachers that she turns for aid. 115 159 756 787 755

The Supernatural Universe

Sanapia's description of the supernatural universe is full of contradictory elements. This is not as great an obstacle to action as it may seem since she addresses each element individually as the situation demands. She has no need to attempt to grasp the entirety of this universe at once. Sanapia is able to select from her potpourri of supernaturalistic notions the ones which best suit a particular occasion. 115 159 756 775

She believes that living human beings share the earth with the ghosts, or malevolent spirits of deceased humans who, alive, led evil lives. The ghosts can enter into the world of men, but men cannot enter the world of ghosts except through death. Also, somewhere, neither in the plane of living man nor in the plane of ghost existence, is the realm of pure, unembodied supernatural power. Such entities as the sun, the earth, and the eagle are able to tap this power and thus possess it to a greater extent than can mortal men. Power can be acquired by men only through secondhand channels and never from its source. A mortal would be killed if exposed to pure power. The power, from its original source, is inexhaustible. 115 159 756 778

In yet another plane of existence are found the spirits of good men such as the disciples of Jesus and the spirits of Sanapia's mother and uncle. This realm is not quite like heaven, which is the abode of God and Jesus and the eternal home of those ordinary souls who have nothing to offer the world of the living, as do the spirits of Medicine men or the disciples of Jesus. Hell is somewhere deep in the earth. Sanapia believes that it is the special eternal home of evil white men. Her notions of the nature of hell follow the standard Christian concept. 115 159 756 775 776 772 177

Peyote is similar to the sun or the eagle in its ability to embody an extraordinary degree of supernatural power. However, unlike the sun or the eagle, peyote comes from the Christian God as a sign of his love for all Indian people. According to Sanapia, the sun has existed longer then the Christian God, and is therefore entirely self-sufficient. 115 159 756 755 778 776

Thus Sanapia can become more or less Christian, peyotist, or Plains shaman as varying situations present themselves. By not assigning a negative value to contradictory elements in her supernaturalistic universe and by oversimplifying the similarities, Sanapia possesses a flexibility which confounds any attempt to present a very cogent description of her "religion." If a key pervasive theme had to be chosen, it probably would be concerned with the idea of supernatural power and the desirability of its acquisition and control. 115 159 766 771 778

A Successor

At the present time Sanapia is beginning to consider the problem of a successor, for she feels that her doctoring career is rapidly approaching its final 115 159 756 593

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several in each hand and taps the patient's face. This is felt to transfer the positive qualities of these stones—firmness and stability—to the patient's face.

Intercession of the Medicine Eagle

If the patient is still not improved after the peyote meeting, Sanapia will move to her ultimate level of doctoring intensity by attempting to call her Medicine eagle to her assistance through the intercession of the spirits of her mother and maternal uncle. This step is not taken at the beginning of treatment because of the dangers involved with the presence of so great an amount of supernatural power. It is possible that she might kill her patient by exposing him to this burst of supernatural energy. Also, Sanapia forestalls calling her ultimate powers into play because of her feeling that the physical reactions which this powerful presence produces in her will ultimately cause her death.

On the second day, if she has decided to follow this course of action, she refrains from her sunrise and midday doctoring. The patient spends the day resting and drinking great quantities of peyote and *bekwinatiu* "tea." Sanapia passes the daylight hours alone in some secluded area preparing herself for the traumatic activities in which she will be engaged after sunset.

> I set somewhere out there away from peoples . . . be by myself. I don't do nothing but sit and think about things. Like what my mother told me about things, and what my uncle told me. Think about all the years I come along and how up to today I'm still living. I don't do anything different from what I do if I am sitting anywhere by myself . . . just thinking about them things.

Immediately before sunset Sanapia goes to the stream which flows near her house and washes her hands and face before returning to her house. Any small children or infants who happen to be members of the household at this time are taken to spend the night with relatives in a nearby town, so they need not be exposed to the potential dangers of the night's doctoring activities. Sanapia firmly instructs her patient that he must do whatever she requests of him during the coming night. If he reacts slowly to her commands, he could die. Once again, this instruction is given in recognition of the dangers of supernatural power.

The night's doctoring follows the basic pattern of the first two treatments of the first day; however, this last treatment of the second day will continue throughout the night and will contain the crucial element of Sanapia's singing of her Medicine song. Sometime late in the night when Sanapia feels the proper inspiration, she begins to sing her song. She will sing it over and over again until the spirits she is calling come to her. The first singing of the song takes place with her patient as she fans him with her Medicine feather. She then leaves the house and continues her singing as she sits alone in the dark.

Sanapia first sees the spirits of her mother and uncle as two lights burning on the crest of a hill approximately a hundred yards south of her house. They slowly approach her. The rapidity of their approach corresponds to the intensity of Sanapia's singing, for it is her song which is drawing them to her. They

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finally stand before her, looking entirely natural and lifelike, much as they looked during Sanapia's adolescence. Sanapia continues her singing as they stand silently before her. In her song she tells them that she is alone and helpless and that she has no one to whom she can turn for help but them. She reminds them of their pledge of aid whenever she might need it during her lifetime. Sanapia may have to repeat her song for several hours as the spirits stand gazing down at her. Finally, with gestures of the hands they indicate that Sanapia will have what she wishes.

This means that the spirits of her mother and uncle have interceded with the Medicine eagle on her behalf. If the Medicine eagle is going to appear to Sanapia, it is at this time that he makes his appearance. Sanapia does not move after the spirits of her mother and uncle have left her. She ceases her Medicine song, but she remains to pray for a while longer before returning to her patient. Sanapia also must rest while her heart and breathing recover normalcy after the agitation they experienced during the apparition of the spirits.

She describes the appearance of the Medicine eagle in the following account:

> I was so tired then and I was crying too. Sitting there and seeing my mother like that. All at once I felt cold wind pushing me down. It was on my head and all around . . . flatten down the grass around me and I had to lean on my hands because it was heavy like I thought it might push me down right over my face. My blanket was blowing off me and I was grabbing for it . . . blowing my hair all over. Got scared and started shaking. Boy! that wind blow dust in my eyes and I was rubbing them when all at once everything got calm . . . like a dream like when you be sleeping way in the night. I saw that eagle . . . big, big, like an eagle . . . shining so pretty on its feathers. And I guess I was being silly because I start crying some more . . . just like some old woman. But I hear it in my mind, you know, say, "Go ahead, get him well. You can do it." Then I don't see nothing . . . I guess it's gone then.

Sanapia returns to her patient and attempts to utilize her newly acquired power increase to cure him. She uses only her Medicine feather and medicine smoke at this point. Most of her energy is aimed at instilling in her patient, through her prayers and contact with her feather, enough power to negate the malevolent forces which are acting to keep the patient from recovering. She does not come in physical contact with the patient at this time, for she feels that such contact would kill him.

If her patient has recovered during the night, she takes him outside with her before sunrise to make her morning prayers. She then blesses him in the standard manner and instructs him to wear the red paint for two days before he washes it off. This blessing on the morning of the third day after the initiation of doctoring marks the end of treatment.

Payments

The final payment is made within the succeeding weeks. Sanapia does not state a price but must accept whatever is offered her. She has received from

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the imitative and sympathetic mystical rapport an eagle doctor possess with his supernatural patron, the eagle; and it suggests that possibly this method of witchcraft is, or was, in the form of a special Medicine solely possessed by doctors with eagle power and that doctors who possessed a different supernatural patron would also possess different method of witchcraft. The emphasis on prayers to the sun is also relevant.

The Symptoms of Witch Sickness

Sanapia feels that the symptoms exhibited by an individual who has been witched are unmistakable. Such a person feels tired and listless and is unable to retain food. He wants to sleep continually and usually suffers from fever. The unique symptom of witchcraft, according to Sanapia, is excessive perspiration on the top of the victim's head, perspiration which the victim cannot feel and which can be felt only by a doctor possessing the proper Medicine. She believes that this localized fever is caused by "foamy stuff" which accumulates under the skin surface at the top of the head. The foamy stuff is, in turn, caused by the magically toxic witch's feather. Also occurring are symptoms which are very similar to the unilateral facial paralysis which appears with ghost sickness. In the case of witchcraft, however, the victim's eyes do not water, he does not salivate excessively, and the contortions of the face, hands, and arms occur in spasmodic fashion rather than the constant state of paralysis found with ghost sickness. In both cases the contortions of the face are felt to be caused by pockets of foamy stuff which accumulate under the skin.

Sanapia feels that ghost and witch sickness are the most difficult types of sickness to treat because both are essentially unnatural and malevolent. In contrast, pneumonia, for example, is a natural sickness which does not possess the supernatural tenacity of illnesses which are backed by the supernatural and malevolent resolve of a ghost or witch. Thus with ghost and witch sickness, Sanapia must not only cure the symptomatic effects of these illnesses but must also act to neutralize the malevolent supernatural power which is somehow contiguous with these symptoms.

Treatment of Witch Sickness

When Sanapia doctors a victim of witchcraft, she utilizes *təpinatsu*, *ekapokowa:pi*, *kusiwəna*, her Medicine feather, glass slivers, charcoal from the peyote drum, and her sucking horn. She prepares a thin paste of *kusiwəna* and applies it to the area of the patient's body which she feels to be the place where the feather is located. *Təpinatsu* and *ekapokowa:pi* are deposited on live coals to produce medicine smoke which is wafted over the patient to induce healing.

The procedure begins before sunrise on the first day of treatment when Sanapia makes her morning prayers to the rising sun. She begins treatment proper when she feels all conditions to be favorable. Exactly what criteria Sanapia uses

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to judge when the time is right to begin treatment would be difficult to outline. A good portion of such a feeling would naturally be highly personal. Some conditions which would be negative influences on Sanapia's decision to begin treatment might be barking dogs, the sudden appearance of visitors, an infant's crying, or a sudden change of weather. Sanapia would consider barking dogs or a sudden change of weather as negative omens. The appearance of visitors or the crying of an infant would simply be distracting to her.

When she initiates treatment, she first prays over the patient and fans smoke produced by the *tapinatsu* and *ekapokowa:pi* over him. After her first prayer, in which she calls on her powers to assist her, she takes her charcoal medicine and draws a circle around the area on the patient's body in which she feels the feather is located to prevent the feather's escape to another area of the body. Next, she makes several incisions in the area of the circle and applies a thin paste of *kusiwana* over the incisions. She then fans her medicine smoke over this area and begins her attempt to suck the feather from the patient's body.

As blood, sucked from the area of incisions, collects in her sucking horn or in her mouth, she deposits it on a white paper plate which she keeps near her. The entire procedure of cutting, applying medicine, fanning, and attempting to remove the feather by suction continues until Sanapia has removed the feather or has come to the conclusion that her powers are not sufficient to cure the patient. When and if the feather appears in the plate of blood she shows the plate to the patient, or the patient's parents, and pronounces him cured; and, after giving the patient a final blessing, the treatment is completed.

The word "appears," when used in connection with the removal of the witch's feather, must be understood in a special sense. Sanapia does not state that she removes a real feather. She reports that the Comanche words she uses when exhibiting the plate of blood to the patient after the "removal of the feather" means that the effects of the feather have been removed. She feels that the witch can project the evil potential of the plume into the body of the victim, though the feather itself is not magically injected into the vitcim. Sanapia doctors to alleviate the physical symptoms which result from the magically injected malevolent essence of the eagle plume utilized in the act of witchcraft. This notion of transmitting the essence of an object into a person was mentioned in the discussion of Sanapia's doctoring of ghost sickness. During her doctoring in the specially arranged peyote meeting, Sanapia attempted to transmit the pliable qualities of the wet drumhead to the patient's face. She also applied the stone peyote drum "bosses" to the patient's face so that, through her powers, the positive qualities of these stones—firmness and stability—could be injected into the patient's contorted face to heal him. Just as Sanapia attempted to inflict positive powers from their source to a patient, so could she use her powers to inject negative essences of an object into an individual. But what is the particular malevolent essence of an eagle plume which can be utilized to witch? As we discuss the manner in which Sanapia conceptualizes the nature and cause of human illness, the answer will present itself.

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the stampeding buffalo without stepping into a grass-covered badger or prairie-dog hole. 778 492

It was his medicine that enabled him to crawl into a cavalry bivouac and sever the eight-foot rope that each soldier had tied to his wrist, so his horse might graze safely during the night, and without waking the sleeper or his comrades lead the horse away. 224 778 726

It was his medicine that caused his wives to be friendly and congenial, one with the other. It resulted in the wives' caring for his camp, looking after his surplus horses, and bearing mostly boy babies. For none of these things did he take credit personally. But he was justly proud of his medicine that had brought all these things about, and he guarded it like a jealous lover. 778 [595] [842]

To sum up the attributes of a name-giver: he needed a keen ear and an extensive knowledge of the vocabulary—perhaps a sense of humor helped—and he must have a successful reputation as a warrior-hunter and a willingness to share his medicine. Custom required him to give each individual named a supply of his medicine. Warriors often refused to give a name because it meant parting with a portion of their medicine. They feared the remainder might prove inadequate. Apparently the true name-giver's supply had a similarity to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel of the widow at Zarepath, while she fed the fugitive Elijah. It was replenished as used. 553 778 701 [555]

My reading indicates that the Comanche placed more emphasis or dependence on the name than did any of the other Plains tribes. A warrior might carry a number of names, should he live a long and successful life. In the event a boy developed into a sickly youngster, or was accident-prone, his parents were apt to seek out one reputed to have even stronger medicine than the one who gave him the first name and ask for another name. Directly after puberty when a youth went alone to fast and pray for a vision, should his vision have particular significance, he would be given a name in keeping with the vision. But no Comanche dared name himself. [171] [551] [881] [787]

After his acceptance as a warrior, should he develop outstanding characteristics in methods, strategy, or bravery, he might be given yet another name, descriptive of his accomplishments. For example, there was the Mexican captive Mo-cho-rook, about whom I tell in another chapter. Raised and trained as a Comanche warrior, he was given this name because "he so cruel, he makes Comanche blood run cold." He became a legend while yet he lived. 553 701 551